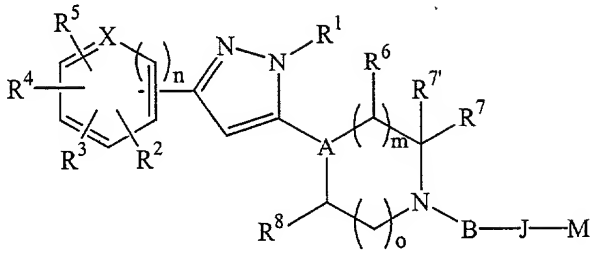
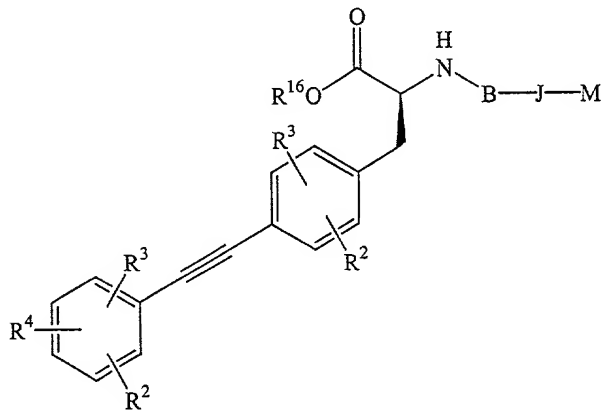
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A compound of formula I or formula I′



I



I′

where:

m is an integer selected from 0, 1, and 2;

n and o are integers independently selected from 0 and 1;

A is selected from the group consisting of N and CH;

B is selected from the group consisting of -CH_2-CH_2-, -CH_2-CH_2-CH_2-, -CH_2-CH_2-NH-, -CH_2-O-CH_2-, -CH_2-S-CH_2-, -C(=O)-NH-, -C(=O)-CH_2-, -CH_2-C(=O)-NH-, -C(=O)-CH_2-C(=O)-, -C(=O)-NH-CH_2-, -C(=O)-NH-, -S(=O)-, -S(=O)$_2$-,-S(=O)-NH-, -S(=O)$_2$-NH-, -S(=O)-CH_2-, -S(=O)$_2$-CH_2-, -S(=O)-CH_2-NH-, -S(=O)$_2$-CH_2-NH-, -S(=O)$_2$-NH-CH_2-, -CH_2-S(=O)$_2$-NH-, -C(=O)-NH-S(=O)$_2$-, -S(=O)$_2$-NH-C(=O)-, -C(=O)-CH_2-S(=O)$_2$-, and -S(=O)$_2$-CH_2-C(=O)-;

J is absent or is selected from the group consisting of -O-, -S-, -CHR^{15}-O-, -CH_2-CHR^{15}-O-, -NH-, -NH-CHR^{15}-, -NH-CHR^{15}-C(=O)-, -C(=O)-, -CH_2-, -CHR^{15}-CH_2-NH-, -C(=O)-CHR^{15}-, and -C(=O)-CHR^{15}-NH-;

L is selected from the group consisting of -CH_2-O-, -O-CH_2-, -CH_2-CH_2-O-, -O-CH_2-CH_2-, -CH_2-O-CH_2-, -CH_2-S-CH_2-, -C(=O)-NH-, -O-C(=O)-NH-, -CH_2-C(=O)-NH-, -C(=O)-CH_2-NH-,

$-C(=O)-NH-CH_2-$, $-NH-C(=O)-$, $-NH-C(=O)-O-$, $-NH-CH_2-C(=O)-$, $-NH-C(=O)-CH_2-$, $-CH_2-NH-C(=O)-$, $-NH-C(=O)-NH-$, $-NH-S(=O)_2-NH-$, $-NH-S(=O)_2-$, $-NH-S(=O)_2-CH_2-$, $-CH_2-NH-S(=O)_2-$, $-S(=O)_2-NH-$, $-S(=O)_2-NH-CH_2-$, $-CH_2-S(=O)_2-NH-$, $-C(=O)-NH-S(=O)_2-$, $-S(=O)_2-NH-C(=O)-$, $-CH_2-NH-$, $-CH_2-CH_2-NH-$, $-NH-CH_2-$, $-NH-CH_2-CH_2-$, $-CH_2-NH-CH_2-$, $-C\equiv C-$, $-CH_2-C\equiv C-$, $-CH_2-CH_2-$, $-CH_2-CH_2-CH_2-$, $-CH_2-CH=CH-$, $-CH=CH-CH_2-$, and $-CH=CH-$;

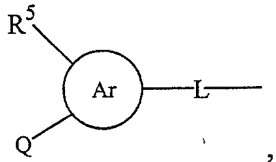
M is selected from the group consisting of R^9 and an optionally substituted group selected from phenyl, naphthyl, C_3-C_7-cycloalkyl, and heterocyclyl, the heterocyclyl group being aliphatic, partially unsaturated, or aromatic, and containing 1 or 2 rings each containing 5-7 ring atoms of which 0-3 are hetero atoms selected from N, O and S, provided that at least one ring contains a heteroatom and where any ring carbon or sulfur may optionally be oxidized, the optional substituents being up to three groups selected from R^1, R^2, and R^9;

Q is selected from the group consisting of $-C(=O)OR^{16}$, $-C(=O)-NH-C(=O)-CF_3$, $-C(=O)-NH-S(=O)_2-R^2$, $-C(=O)-NR^1-OH$, 5-oxo-4,5-dihydro[1,2,4]oxadiazol-3-yl, and 1*H*-tetrazol-5-yl;

X is A when n is 1 and is CH, N, O or S when n is 0;

R^1 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, $(C_1$-$C_6)$alkyl, halo-$(C_1$-$C_6)$alkyl, and $(C_3$-$C_6)$cycloalkyl;

R^2, R^3 and R^5 are individually selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, nitro, phenyl, phenoxy, benzyl, C_1-C_6alkyl, halo, halo-C_1-C_6alkyl, C_3-C_6cycloalkyl, C_1-C_6alkoxy, hydroxy, C_1-C_2alkoxy-methoxy, hydroxy-C_1-C_6alkyl, formyl, C_1-C_6alkylcarbonyl, amino, C_1-C_6alkylamino, aminocarbonyl, C_1-C_6alkylaminocarbonyl, formylamino, and C_1-C_6alkylcarbonylamino, where any alkyl or phenyl may optionally be substituted with halo or Q;

R^4 is selected from the group consisting of R^2 and 

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where Ar is a homo- or hetero-aryl group having 1 or 2 rings, each ring containing 5, 6 or 7 ring atoms of which 1-3 may be heteroatoms selected from N, O and S;

R^6 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_1-C_6alkyl, halo, halo-C_1-C_6alkyl, C_3-C_6cycloalkyl, C_1-C_6alkoxy, C_1-C_6alkoxy-C_1-C_6alkyl, hydroxy, hydroxy-C_1-C_6alkyl,

$HC(=O)$-C_1-C_6alkyl, carboxy, carboxy-C_1-C_6alkyl, carbonylamino-C_1-C_6alkyl, aminocarbonyl, (C_1-C_6alkyl)aminocarbonyl, di(C_1-C_6alkyl)aminocarbonyl, and aminocarbonyl-C_1-C_6alkyl; or

R^7 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_1-C_6alkyl, halo, halo-C_1-C_6alkyl, C_3-C_6cycloalkyl, C_1-C_6alkoxy, C_1-C_6alkoxy-C_1-C_6alkyl, hydroxy, hydroxy-C_1-C_6alkyl, $HC(=O)$-C_1-C_6alkyl, carboxy, carboxy-C_1-C_6alkyl, carbonylamino-C_1-C_6alkyl, aminocarbonyl, (C_1-C_6alkyl)aminocarbonyl, di(C_1-C_6alkyl)aminocarbonyl, and aminocarbonyl-C_1-C_6alkyl;

$R^{7'}$ is hydrogen; or

R^7 and $R^{7'}$ together with the carbon to which they are bonded form -C(=O)-;

R^8 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxy, C_1-C_6alkoxy, C_1-C_6alkyl, halo, halo-C_1-C_6alkyl, and C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl;

R^9 is selected from the group consisting of $-NR^{10}R^{11}$, $-C(=NR^{12})-NR^{13}$, $-N=CR^{14}-NR^{10}R^{11}$, $-NR^{13}-CR^{14}=NR^{12}$, and $-NR^{13}-C(=NR^{12})-NR^{13}$;

R^{10}, R^{11}, R^{12}, R^{13}, and R^{14} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxy, hydroxy-C_1-C_6alkyl, C_1-C_6alkyl, halo-C_1-C_6alkyl, C_1-C_6alkoxy, C_1-C_6alkoxy-C_1-C_6alkyl, and C_3-C_7 cycloalkyl; or any member of the group R^{10}, R^{11}, R^{12}, R^{13}, and R^{14} together with the nitrogen to which it is attached forms a 5, 6 or 7 member heterocycle with any other member of the group, the heterocycle optionally containing one additional heteroatom selected from N, O or S;

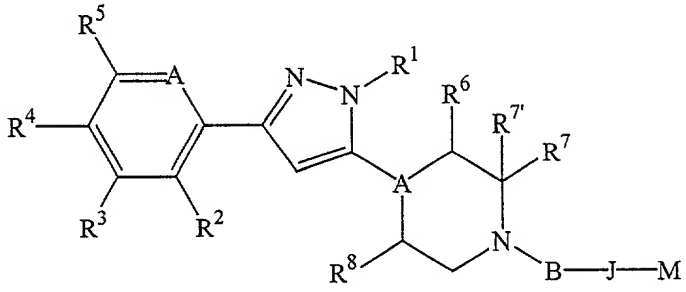
R^{15} is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_1-C_{12}alkyl, C_3-C_7 cycloalkyl, aminocarbonyl, C_1-C_6alkylaminocarbonyl, and di(C_1-C_6alkyl)aminocarbonyl; and

R^{16} is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_1-C_6alkyl, C_3-C_{13} cycloalkyl, C_6-C_{10}aryl, acetylamino-C_1-C_{12}alkyl, C_1-C_6alkylcarbonyloxy-C_1-C_6alkyl, and C_6-C_{10}aryl-C_0-C_6alkylcarbonyloxy-C_1-C_6alkyl,

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof;

provided that the compound is not N-[2-[1-(aminoiminomethyl)-3-piperidinyl]-1-oxoethyl]-4-phenylethynyl-phenylalanine methyl ester or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. A compound of claim 1 that is a compound of formula II

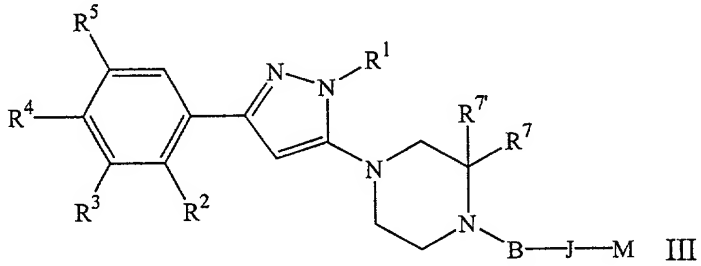


II

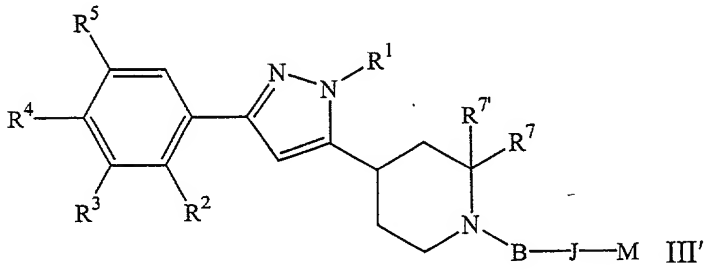
where the substituents are as defined in claim 1;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

3. A compound of claim 2 that is a compound of formula III or formula III'



III

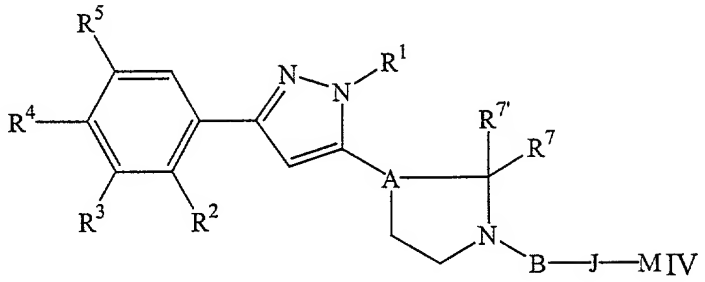


III'

where the substituents are as defined in claim 1,

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

4. A compound of formula I that is a compound of formula IV

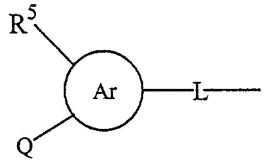


where the substituents are as defined in claim 1,
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

5. A compound of claim 1 where R^1 is hydrogen or lower alkyl.

6. A compound of claim 1 where R^2 and R^3 are hydrogen, lower alkyl, cyano, or halo.

7. A compound of claim 1 where



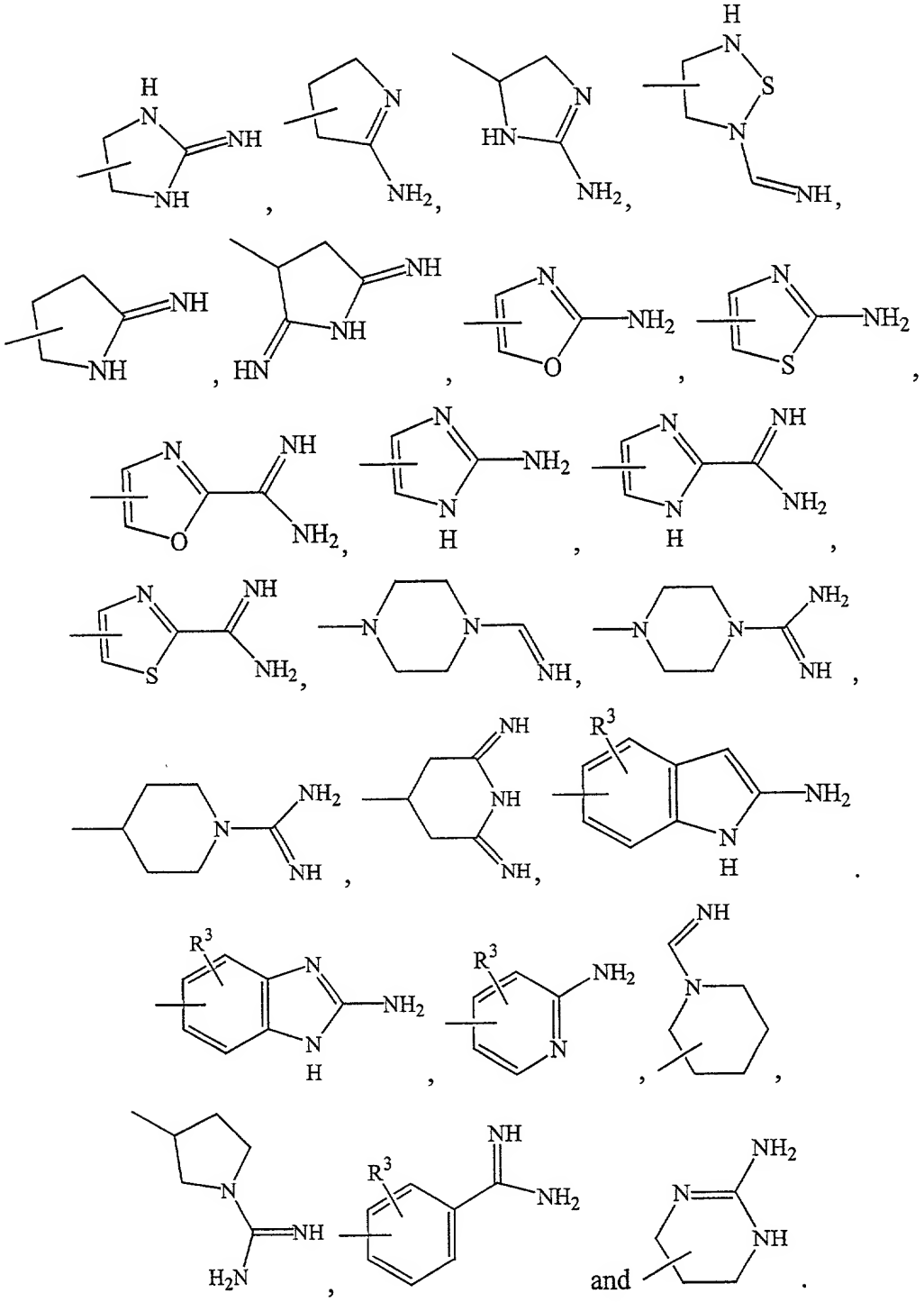
R^4 is , especially where one or more of the following preferences applies: Ar is selected from the group consisting of phenyl, furyl, thienyl, oxazolyl, thiazolyl, and pyrrolyl; R^5 is hydroxy, C_1-C_2alkoxy-methoxy and C_1-C_3-alkoxy; Q is a negatively charged species such as carboxy or a prodrug thereof or tetrazole; and L is -O-, $-CH_2$-O-, -O-CH_2- or $-CH_2-CH_2$-O-.

8. A compound of claim 1 where B is -C(=O)- or $-S(=O)_2$-.

9. A compound of claim 1 where J is $-CH_2$-, $-CH_2-CH_2$-, -NH-, -NH-CH_2-, $-CH_2$-NH-, $-CH_2$-NH-C(=O)-, $-CH_2$-NH-C(=O)-C_1-C_6alkyl- and $-CH_2$-NH-C(=O)-CH(C_3-C_{12}cycloalkyl)-.

10. A compound of claim 1 where B-J is selected from the group consisting of -C(=O)-CH_2-NH-C(=O)-CH(C_1-C_6alkyl)-, -C(=O)-CH_2-NH-C(=O)-CH(C_3-C_{12} cycloalkyl)-, -C(=O)-NH-(C_2-C_6alkyl)-, $-S(=O)_2$-NH-(C_2-C_6alkyl)-, -C(=O)-NH-, $-S(=O)_2$-NH-, -C(=O)-CH_2- and $-S(=O)_2-CH_2$-.

11. A compound of claim 1 where M is selected from the group consisting of R^9,



12. A composition comprising a compound of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

13. A method of treating a mammal having a disease for which the antagonism of IL-2/IL-2R binding is indicated, comprising administering to the mammal a therapeutically effective dose of a compound of claim 1 through 4.

14. The method of claim 13 where the disease is T-lymphocyte-induced rejection of an allograft.

15. The method of claim 14 where T-lymphocytes which express IL-2R in response to antigens of the allograft are contacted with the compound.

16. The method of claim 14 where the allograft is a skin allograft.

17. The method of claim 14 where the allograft is a transplanted organ.

18. The method of claim 14 where the transplanted organ is a heart.

19. The method of claim 13 where the disease is an autoimmune disease.

20. The method of claim 19 where the autoimmune disease is selected from the group consisting of rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, uveitis, and psoriasis.